

One of the fledglings, on pursuit, flew into a cranny of a nearby stone wall. Here I watched him for some time. He was olivaceous brown throughout, being lighter on his abdomen. The wings were dull brown with two wide clear dandelion yellow wing-bars. The wings were very large in comparison to the bird. Some down still clung to the top of his head.

It seemed a miracle that a fledgling so tiny, just seven and one half days from the egg, could fly with such wonderful strength, twenty feet in one flight, as I saw him do, and catch his perch like his experienced parents.

Two days later the little clearing where this remarkable pair of warblers made their home, settled into its usual quietness. No more the alarm note of the anxious mother greeted me, no more the love song of the Golden-wing floated to his mate. Nothing but the vacant nest gave evidence of this history making pair.

THE LITTLE GULL, *LARUS MINUTUS* PALL., IN MAINE,
WITH REMARKS ON ITS DISTRIBUTION, AND
ITS OCCURRENCE IN AMERICA.

BY ARTHUR H. NORTON.

On July 20, 1910, an adult male *Larus minutus* was taken at Pine Point, Scarborough, Maine, and the following day it came into my hands.

The bird is in nuptial plumage, with the post nuptial moult begun. The outer primaries are much worn, while some of the inner ones, fifth, sixth, and seventh, are new, not yet having attained their full growth. It wears the black hood, though this is sprinkled on the forehead, crown, and chin with a few white feathers of the post nuptial dress. While apparently in good health, it was almost entirely free from deposits of fat. Its weight, with stomach empty, was $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. The right testis was 3 mm.

long. Total length, 242 mm. (11.50 in.); total extent, 692 mm. (27.25 in.); wing, 212 mm. (8.38 in.); culmen, 24 mm. (.94 in.); tarsus, 25 mm. (.97 in.); middle toe, 26 mm. (1.00 in.). Bill purplish black, feet dusky flesh color.

The bird had been seen in the same vicinity several times during the previous six weeks, so I was informed, usually alone when feeding, though resting on one or more occasions with the Bonaparte's Gulls.

This is apparently the first occurrence of the Little Gull in New England, the third in the United States, and about the sixth or seventh occurrence in America. It is, therefore, entitled to rank as an occasional straggler to this continent, and is deserving of renewed interest. Consequently it seems timely to mention its field and distinctive marks, and to review its distribution and its American records.

The adults are distinguished at once by the broad white posterior border of the wing, without black, the pale pearl gray mantle, and the slaty lower surface of the wings. The young, by the inner vanes of the outer primaries being chiefly white, the inner primaries with both webs gray, their tips white, the white increasing in length as it proceeds in, and without black subterminal areas. Moreover, it is the smallest known gull.

In summer it occurs in Sweden, Russia, throughout northern Siberia, more rarely in southern Siberia, and has been recorded from the southern part of the Okhotsk Sea.¹ It is found throughout the year on the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas.² Winters in northern Africa and northern India,³ and in the North Sea in the vicinity of Heligoland.⁴ At the latter place the fall migration is said to be a striking phenomenon.⁵ In the British Islands it occurs only as a frequent visitant. It is a bird partial to lacustrine and estuarine districts.

In America, one was obtained at the Bermudas Jan. 22, 1849, by Major Wedderburn, and another was killed the following

¹ Taczanowski, Mem. St. Petersbourg Acad. Sci., VIII series, XXXIX, ii, pp. 1043, 1044.

² Temminck, Man. d'Orn., pt. IV, p. 490.

³ Taczanowski, l. c.

⁴ Gätke, Heligoland as an Orn. Observatory, p. 556.

⁵ Gätke, l. c., p. 555.

month.¹ A few were seen, and a specimen procured, near Mazatlan, Mexico, March 27, 1868, by Colonel Grayson.²

An immature specimen was shot at Fire Island, Long Island, N. Y., about Sept. 15, 1887, and is preserved in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City,³ while another specimen was taken at Rockaway Beach, Long Island, N. Y., May 10, 1902. This was a female "in immature plumage" and is preserved in the Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences,⁴ Brooklyn, N. Y. We therefore have five unchallenged American records.

There apparently exist important discrepancies between the Sir John Franklin record and the grounds advanced for its elimination; therefore it may properly be reconsidered. This record was rejected largely on account of the following statement from Dr. Elliott Coues: "Professor Baird thinks that there is no good reason to consider this bird an inhabitant of or even a visitor to North America. It has been included in our fauna on the strength of a statement of Sabine, who saw a small Gull, with black head and bill, greatly resembling the *Larus minutus*. This, however, was before *Larus bonapartei* was described and made known by Richardson in F. B. A., and a poorly preserved or immature specimen might easily be referred to *Larus minutus* by one ignorant of the existence of two species."⁵

Swainson and Richardson say: "A specimen obtained on Sir John Franklin's first expedition, was determined by Mr. Sabine to be a young bird of the first year of this species [*L. minutus*], exactly according with M. Temminck's description."⁶

Coues has said: "Saw a small Gull with black head and bill." This is plainly an adult bird, and if only seen belongs in the limbo where Dr. Coues placed it. Richardson, however, has said: "Obtained a young bird of the first year . . . according exactly with M. Temminck's description."

On referring to Temminck for diagnostic features of the young

¹ Hist. N. Am. Bds., Water Bds., II, p. 265.

² *Ibid.*

³ Dutcher, Auk, V, p. 172.

⁴ Braislin, Auk, XX, p. 52.

⁵ Proc. Philadelphia Acad. Nat. Sci., XIV, 1862, p. 311.

⁶ Fauna Bor.-Amer., II, p. 426, fide Dutcher, Auk, V, p. 171.

of the year we find the following statement: "Les quatres premières rémiges noires sur les barbes extérieures et à leur bout, mais blanches sur les barbes intérieures; *les trois suivantes cendrées en dehors, et la point blanches.*"¹ (Italics mine.) That a part of the primaries are increasingly white tipped, and the secondaries largely so in birds of the first year, is also shown to be true by Dr. Taczanowski.² The contrary is the case in *Larus philadelphia* which has all the primaries, and even the secondaries, broadly black tipped, merely surmounted so to speak with small white spots. Thus the posterior border of the wing is entirely black in the latter species. In *Larus franklinii* the outer *five* or *six* primaries, in this plumage, are black on both webs.³

In view of this, unless it can be shown that Swainson and Richardson are in error, in their detailed statement, it seems that the British American record should be reinstated. We have still one hopeless report to notice in closing. I refer to Temminck's statement that "this bird appears also in Greenland."⁴

GENERAL NOTES.

The Red-billed Tropic-bird in Arizona.— In 'The Auk' for October, 1905 (Vol. XXII, p. 408), Mr. George F. Breninger recorded a specimen of the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird taken near Phoenix, Arizona, in April, 1905. This bird, which, among others, was recently presented by Dr. L. C. Sanford to the American Museum of Natural History, proves to be a Red-billed Tropic-bird (*Phaëthon athereus*). The dull yellowish color of the bill, which doubtless led to the error in identification, is a mark of immaturity, as is also the broad and unelongated pair of central tail-feathers.

Mr. W. W. Cooke informs me that there is no other Arizona record of the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird. Hence the species must be removed from the list of birds of that territory and its place taken by the Red-billed

¹ Man. d'Orn., II, p. 788.

² Mem. St. Peter. Ac., VIII, S., XXXIX, ii, pp. 1043, 1044.

³ Coues, Bds. Northwest, p. 655.

⁴ Man. d'Orn., IV, 1840, p. 490.